CBS NEWS-COLUMBIA DISASTER (1:05 P.M E.T-1:21 P.M E.T) (2-1-2003)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPZHessfqzs (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPZHessfqzs)

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From Saturday, February 1st, 2003 CBS NEWS breaking news coverage of the Columbia Space Shuttle breakup killing the crew of 7. STS-107 was wrapping up a 16 day mission in space, communication was lost at 9:00 A.M E.T, just 16 minutes before landing and breaking up over Texas.

- Coverage runs from 1:05 P.M E.T - 1:21 P.M E.T

  THE STS-107 Crew:
  Commander: Rick D. Husband
  Pilot: William C. McCool
  Mission Specialist 1: David M. Brown
  Mission Specialist 2: Kalpana Chawla
  Mission Specialist 3: Michael P. Anderson
  Mission Specialist 4:Laurel B. Clark
  Payload Specialist 1: Ilan Ramon

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until the fateful seconds this morning over dallas so we just want to make it very clear that while you may hear some speculation along the way in fact nobody knows what happened to it and nobody may know for a long time if ever i would add a third level of speculation because there was an israeli citizen on board this flight there are going to be some people you may hear as you turn around that perhaps terrorism was involved in this security for this shuttle flight was beefed up because of the presence of the colonel from israel however the homeland security department says there is is is basically discounting that that there is no way where this vessel was at the time it broke up that anyone at bomb could have hit it john roberts pointed out sort of an inner ballistic missile it's unlikely that terrorism is involved probably provides some lift not a lot that's why the shuttle descends so rapidly but during this phase in flight the shuttle is actually rolling and banking through the air to burn off energy uh they do have elevons they call them they're the wing flaps on the bottom of each wing that move as you get down deeper in the atmosphere those are hydraulically powered obviously a failure in the hydraulic system could be a factor if the leading edge of that left wing which where we know some debris hit during launch from the insulation on the tank caused any loss of integrity with the heat protection system of the orbiter that could have started a failure the last radio communications between the shuttle and mission control involved landing gear tire pressure the landing gear of course are in each wing of the orbit it's hard to see on this model but they have sensors on them that measure the pressure of tires and a change in pressure an unexpected change could indicate something going on there uh the one thing that my sources are unanimous on this morning or this afternoon is the focus right now is on the left wing systems in the left wing that could have led to this failure again not confirmed but it is something they're looking at well bill one more time and for those of you who've been with us all along if an apology is necessary i give it to you but frequently the first things you hear

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but frequently the first things you hear turn out to be wrong or at the very minimum not quite right what bill has emphasized time and time again here there's not a better reporter on the face space beat than bill he is the premier reporter on this beat his sources are telling him that in the very early stages just the front edge of the investigation that nasa is thinking about that uh left wing because they believe confirmed they believe that something happened on that left wing what caused it was it something else on the on the spacecraft uh at that point we simply don't know but bill with all that in mind does this or does it not present itself as part of an ongoing piece we mentioned earlier that after liftoff some concern was expressed about a piece of insulation that when the fuel tanks necessary for launch separated from the spacecraft there's some concern that a piece of insulation had possibly hit a wing was it the left wing it was dan it was the left wing and it really happened long before the tanks separated the debris we're talking about came off about a minute and 20 seconds or so into flight this is after it had gone beyond the speed of sound but while it's still fairly low in the atmosphere it's a subtle thing it's hard to see and we should not connect these two events this could be coincidence it could be the foam hit the left wing and that had nothing at all to do with what happened today but it's a big coincidence at this fault at this point but we've got to stress that until they tell us what the telemetry showed the data that's radioed down on where the wing flaps are positioned the health of the hydraulic system the landing gear tire pressure all of those things that are involved with that left wing until we find out some data there i think it's really premature to try to make any connections here at all other than to say they're looking at systems in the left wing as being a trigger or at least a participant in today's failure right that moves the story along to that extent whether it turns out to be important or not that in the very early stages of some concentration on the left wing of the

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concentration on the left wing of the space shuttle because there is a suspicion please put the word underscored as suspicion that as trouble developed on the space shuttle something whether it was the first something or not something developed possibly again marked the word possibly on the left wing on the telephone now from minneapolis bruce havilland a cousin of columbia astronaut laurel clark native commander clark also a medical doctor who was on her first flight uh that bruce havilland was at the cape to watch his cousin's launch and we thank you for being with us mr havilland and the first thing we want to do is express our condolences our sympathies to you and your family and uh thank you very much for those kind words if you can tell us something about commander laurel clark obviously a tremendous and amazing woman to be a medical doctor and then to become an astronaut when earlier i was listening to a person talk about being terrified when the space shuttle took off several years ago i was on a camping trip uh with laurel and her son and other family members and we talked about the takeoff and um she shared that feeling but she had that passion that he also talked about she loved the nasa space program and was very excited about being in space my wife and i have been getting up um every day since she's been in space and uh turning on the tv and watching the live video my heart goes out to all the family members i met the father of the israeli astronaut

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of the israeli astronaut at the launch and had a very pleasant conversation with him and we all felt that uh a collective sigh of relief as the launch was successful never anticipating what has taken place we thank you for your time for your ins insights and for your hope with the memory of this brave astronaut commander laura clark and again we extend our sympathies thank you very much thank you for your kind words on the telephone now from dayton ohio colonel mark brown who flew this columbia vehicle some years ago the columbia vehicle that was destroyed plummeting from space today colonel brown thank you for being with us oh you're welcome dan thank you can you give us your perspective on what's happened today well obviously this is a tremendous tragedy not only for the nasa family but uh for the nation as well and just like challenger it hits you at two levels first is the the loss of life the loss of friends that impacts all of us and secondly is the technical impact you know what was it that went wrong that resulted in such a horrible outcome and as your previous guests have mentioned there's going to be tremendous amount of effort expended here in the very near term to understand exactly that chain of events that led up to this catastrophe colonel brown as you look at the video i'm not sure you can see it at the moment this amateur video which thus far is the most graphic uh evidence we have of what happened to the spacecraft there's anything in that video you know you have the spec of columbia up there and then sort of a brightness and has that developed does anything come to your mind about what could have might have happened up there yes and in fact as was pointed out by your previous guess everything has to be labeled as speculation at this point and we also have to

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at this point and we also have to remember that we're looking at video that is not in serial it's from different camera perspectives all being looked at you know at different times so one of the things that nasa will be doing right now is the same thing that we're trying to do is figure out what is the actual sequel events that occurred one of the things that caught my eye from one of the video is you can actually see a panel that separates and is floating down away from the orbiter in the jet stream and the panel itself is white colored instead of black colored which again talks to being from the top half of the orbiter instead of the bottom if you continue to watch that sequence then you notice that shortly thereafter there's a bright flash from the what appears to be the aft portion of the orbiter now that that suggests two things first for a a panel whether it's the elevon or something else to depart from the vehicle clearly that was a structural failure the loss of hydraulic fluid for example to the elevon would not cause that something else caused that the secondary effect then is with that panel missing and the vehicle essentially being exposed to an 1800 degree environment at seven to seven times the speed of sound all the systems that have now been uncovered are exposed to that uh thermal load so the secondary thing we see which is the bright flash may actually be some of the subsystems dead detonating as a response to this exposure thermally so like everybody else we're going to have to watch this there clearly are indications that it may be related to the left wing but i think uh we can't say anything more definite than that at this time colonel brown this is russ mitchell i had a question for you when as someone who has flown the columbia describe to us what it's like on re-entry into the atmosphere um excellent question and in fairness i should say i was a mission specialist even though i'm an air force fighter pilot so i rode in the vehicle uh the pilots up in front get a little testy when you claim that you actually flew the vehicle

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actually flew the vehicle re-entry is totally different than ascent where ascent is a very dynamic experience that goes on for eight and a half minutes a lot of shaking and you know fire and that kind of stuff the entry is very benign from a crew member's standpoint it starts typically over the indian ocean where the jorba burn occurs normally in darkness the orbital

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